

25th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SMALL SATELLITE MISSIONS (B4)
Small Satellite Missions Global Technical Session (9-GTS.5)

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THE FIRST SATELLITE ASSEMBLY, INTEGRATION AND TEST FACILITY (AIT) IN THAILAND

Abstract

During over the three decades, Thailand can access space technology through satellite by ground operation only such as THAICOM and THEOS-1. Nowadays, Thai government has changed the policy that strategy is to encourage aerospace and space industries because the value of space technology will provide sustainable development of the country. In the meantime, the second generation of the Thai earth observation satellite (THEOS-2) is procured that the Assembly, Integration and Test facility (AIT) is also built along with the project. The capability of AIT facility is able to support small satellite maximum of 500 kg under areas about 7,000 sqm., which is separated into 2 parts 1) office and 2) high bay. In the priority, the AIT facility will be used to perform the environment test for the small satellite under the THEOS-2 project in 2020. However, for long term, the AIT facility is planned to support the space technology development activities in the country and ASEAN region as well. This paper will present the evolution of Thai space activities aspect including strategy of development of space technology. At present, the development of space technology is greatly interesting for both Thailand and ASEAN region. Something indicates that Thai space consortium is setting up by co-operation between Thai science institutes for developing atmospheric science sensor for small satellite and the others in the future. Moreover, the satellite development is focused by ASEAN country because the space technology is more acceptable to provide the values to their country. Thus, Thailand can be one of service provider to joint development satellite in the region. In addition, according to the facility area is located at Chonburi which is in the special economic zone (EEC: Eastern Economic Corridor). Many regulations were improved to support investor for import, export, collaboration and manufacturing plant. Therefore, the AIT facility might be the center of space technology development in ASEAN region.